



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO  
**CENTER CITY DEVELOPMENT  
 & OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT**

**Alamo Plaza Advisory Committee**

**MINUTES**

**Wednesday, December 3, 2014**

**11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.**

**Little Carver**

**Cultural Community Center**

Vacant	Tri-Chair	-
Marise McDermott	Tri-Chair	Present
Sue Ann Pemberton, FAIA	Tri-Chair	Present
Howard Peak	1994 Alamo Plaza Study Committee Representative	Absent
Ramon J. Vasquez	History/Archeology Representative	Present
Dr. Steve Tomka	History/Archeology Representative	Absent
Dr. Sharon Skrobarcek	History/Archeology Representative	Present
Larry L. Laine	State of Texas Designee	Absent
Mardi Arce	Federal Government Designee	Present
Frank Z. Ruttenberg	Private Property Owner Representative	Present
Davis Phillips	Tourism Designee	Present
Roger Perez	District 1 Appointee	Absent
Anthony Edwards	District 2 Appointee	Present
Patricia Mejia	District 3 Appointee	Present
Rudolph F. Rodriguez	District 4 Appointee	Absent
Gabe Farias	District 5 Appointee	Absent
Rudi Rodriguez	District 6 Appointee	Present
Ed Torres	District 7 Appointee	Present
Boone Powell, FAIA	District 8 Appointee	Absent
Bill Brendel	District 9 Appointee	Present
Jack Judson	District 10 Appointee	Absent

Others Present: Colleen Swain (CCDO), Sarah Esserlieu (CCDO), Mimi Quintanilla (Consultant, Facilitator), Lori Houston (CCDO), Claudia Guerra (OHP), Kathy Rodriguez (OHP), Jackie King (GLO), Rodney Dziuk (TCI), Javier Tamez (CVB), Dr. Andres Tijerina (historian)

**DISABILITY ACCESS STATEMENT**



The ground level entrance to the Little Carver at the Carver Cultural Community Center is accessible to persons with disabilities. Upon entering the building, the elevator leads to the second floor. Parking is available across Hackberry Street from the Carver Cultural Community Center at 215 North Hackberry. Auxiliary aids and services, including Deaf interpreters, must be requested forty-eight [48] hours prior to the meeting. For accessibility assistance, call 207-7268 or 711 (Texas Relay Service for the Deaf).

1. **Welcome** by Marise McDermott at 11:18 a.m.
2. **Report- City Council B Session:** Marise McDermott reported that Council received the vision and guiding principles well and are looking forward to working with the State and business community. The City Council presentation is scheduled for December 11.
3. **Approve Minutes:** The Committee voted in favor of approving the minutes from the August 26, 2014 meeting.
4. **Review and Approve Historic Annotations to Alamo Area Experience Plan Update** (document attached): Colleen Swain introduced Dr. Tijerina. He explained the annotated Alamo Area Experience Plan Update. This included correcting erroneous statements, verifying assertions, preserving the sensitive nature of the historical perspectives, and including historically neglected peoples. He explained balancing folklore with historical archives is necessary because Native Americans didn't keep records the same way the Spanish did. They told tales, folklore, and practiced a different religion. It's similar to the myth of Travis's line in the sand, for which there is no evidence. He explained some Native Americans were hunter-gatherers, but some were sedentary and lived in towns, practiced agriculture, and had social institutions. Some wore western clothing and spoke a European language. He also explained the mission was not the building; it was the congregation of Native Americans. They didn't move the building – they moved the congregation. To them, the church was the front façade of the chapel where they did their sacramental activities and baptisms.

Dr. Tijerina explained the *compañía volante* (flying squadron) was critical. It was a light cavalry mounted troop brought to Valero from Alamo de Parras in Coahuila, which is how the mission got its new name. A *compañía volante* was a unique law enforcement unit on the frontier. To the Spaniard, the *frontera* was not a frontier, which, in English, is a wide open expanse that invites people to explore land and find wealth. In Spanish, a *frontera*, is a border or wall. The Spanish established Texas as a *frontera* to keep out the French, Americans, and hostile Native American groups. The *compañía volante* defended the *frontera* and established a line of presidios to protect the border. They also intermarried with the natives at the mission. La Villita was established to house the native families and *compañía volante* troops. Some of these residents fought in the Battle of the Alamo, and some fought at San Jacinto. Dr. Tijerina explained the mix of Canary Islanders, Natives, and *compañía volante* troops contributed to the ethnic diversity and amalgamation of Mexican and American cultural institutions to create the archetype of a Texan. He stated the Alamo was critical in forming the concept of "Texan."

Marise McDermott clarified that the vision, guiding principles, themes and goals remain unchanged. Through this document, Dr. Tijerina provided historical information that backs up assertions made in the Alamo Area Experience Plan Update. Dr. Tijerina confirmed this. The Committee recommended allowing more time to review Dr. Tijerina's annotated document before approving it. Marise McDermott explained the master planners would be provided the annotated document to understand the deep historical background to the Alamo Area Experience Plan Update.

Dr. Tijerina commented that he added a glossary of terms and continued to explain his annotations. He explained Spanish laws for the New World and the transition from Spanish to Mexican

to American Texas. The United States was established as a federation without a strong central government. However, Mexico allowed their states to have more power than the national government. When Tejanos set up their own independent state government separating from Coahuila, the Mexican Congress didn't allow it because they were already part of Coahuila de Tejas. Tejanos were already angry and wanted separation by 1825. Hidalgo declared Mexican independence in 1810. When he was captured, he commissioned his lieutenants to keep the independence movement going, one of which was a Tejano named Bernardo Gutierrez de Lara. He led the other Tejanos, opened communications with Washington, and secured resources essential to the Texas independent movement.

Dr. Tijerina explained the crucial role Tejanos played in the 11-year Mexican war for independence. In doing so, roughly 50 percent of the entire Tejano civilian population in Texas died. In 1821, Tejanos established an independent democratic State of Texas. They wrote their own laws giving away land to colonists. Steven Austin came to Texas because he received 4,000 acres free from the Tejanos. Texas was not a colony; it was an independent state. Dr. Tijerina explained the role of American President Pope, the ensuing war with Mexico, and the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo as detailed in page 12 of the attached document.

He explained that Santa Anna became the symbol of centralist power and of suppressive brutal government. Dr. Tijerina cautioned against demonizing Santa Anna because he didn't do it by himself – it was an entire movement. He recommended against vilifying Santa Anna excessively to avoid extending the sentiment to Mexican culture. Dr. Tijerina detailed current records providing background to the Battle of the Alamo as outlined in the attached document. He stated there is no record to provide an accurate count of soldiers in the Alamo, but a Mexican colonel counted 250 to 300 bodies.

Rudi Rodriguez asked about the role of Tejanos in the two-year revolutionary period. Dr. Tijerina acknowledged it would be possible to put together a comprehensive list of the Tejanos who fought in the Texas Revolution. He also acknowledged that Tejanos were involved in all aspects of the revolution and instigated the revolution long before Steven F. Austin was ever involved.

Ramon Vazquez suggested including Francisco Ruiz's role as a Tejano loyalist, Blas Herrera, and the families that fought in the Battle of Medina that returned just before the Battle of the Alamo. That has a lot to do with why Tejanos fought in the Alamo – because a lot of them just returned home.

The Committee asked if they could add to this annotated document. Marise McDermott responded that Dr. Tijerina was asked to ensure the themes and goals are backed up historically and with evidence, which he has. She stated it is not likely to change much before being submitted to the master planner due to the tight deadline. There will be a lot more work to do once the master planning process begins with the interpretive strategy for the visitor's center. The Committee is welcome to suggest Dr. Tijerina include more in the report. Colleen Swain noted that historical details will come up during the public master planning process and Dr. Tijerina has agreed to stay on to address those issues as they arise. Rudi Rodriguez requested adding in more information about the Tejano contribution before it goes to City Council.

Dr. Tijerina noted how integral African Americans were to the Texas Revolution (as outlined on page 22 of the attached document). They were rangers and were involved in almost every battle in the Texas Revolution. He explained the Alamo is not only the birthplace of the concept of Texas, but it's the birthplace of the Texan. He encouraged the committee remain true to the historical accounts, that the Alamo is Texas.

Ramon Vasquez asked why Themes C and D were not expanded upon. Dr. Tijerina replied that both themes are related to how it will be done and what will be emphasized in the master plan. He did not expand upon recommendations for activities in the plaza or which stories to tell – that is the Committee's challenge. He stated he will continue to work with the committee through the master planning process to assist as needed.

5. **Presentation for Request for Qualifications:** Colleen Swain asked Committee members to review the draft RFQ and draft executive summary and send comments and questions to Sarah Esserlieu to be discussed at the next meeting. Committee members discussed methods of advertising the RFQ including a news release, various professional organizations, and targeted outreach to identified firms. Colleen Swain explained the Committee would be kept updated throughout the RFQ process. Mimi Quintanilla requested that any comments or questions about Dr. Tijerina's annotations be sent to herself or to Sarah Esserlieu.
6. **Wrap-Up:** Meeting ended at 1:12 p.m.